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had spanned the river he would only be one among many.

All this she said quietly but with an air of sincerity that could not be doubted. Into my life, that had never known the meaning of a romance, had come romance in the person of a charming woman. In a way I could understand that a high strung, sentimental girl should have idealized her father and made a hero of him, but I am naturally a suspicious man and my training had made me cynical. My guide through life has always been to search for a motive.

"Well," I said to her, and purposely my voice was cold, "how does this interest me?"

"I am coming to that," she replied; and then she went to tell me that after her father died the men who owned the bridge had a sudden spasm of generosity and in recognition of his services had given her a few shares of stock in the company, which every year had become more valuable and had paid larger dividends. Meanwhile she had married a rising young lawyer, who, after a couple of terms in the legislature, which gave her an insight into politics and the way legislation is conducted, went down before an attack of typhoid fever. Practically her entire income had come from the dividends paid by her bridge shares.

All went well until a few years before when the insiders began to crowd out the minority shareholders by reducing the dividends, depressing the market price of the stock, and creating the impression that the company was not making as much money as formerly. Being a woman unfamiliar with business and not having any means of ascertaining the truth, Mrs. Watson had to accept these statements, but when an offer was made to buy her stock at a low figure she refused for sentimental reasons. Every year the dividends were cut until she was forced to supplement her income by outside work.

When the rival bridge company came into the field Mrs. Watson had persuaded her people to send her to Washington to look after their interests, and while some of them objected to employing a woman, she was finally able to convince them she could be of more service than a man and the job was turned over to her. When she told me this I exclaimed: "So it is you I've been fighting, and I've got to thank you for blocking my game."

"Yes," she replied with a saucy little toss of her head. "I was onto you from the beginning and it amused me to be able to keep you guessing. I am not surprised that you got Shropton," the man to whom I had paid \$5,000. "I always mistrusted him and suspected that he was the kind of man who wouldn't stay bought."

"I don't want to pay you any foolish compliments," I said, "but I take off my hat here and now to you and admit there are things you can teach me. If you want to consider an offer of a partnership I shall be glad to make it, for I believe that the two of us would make a flourishing firm."

I was still young and unmarried, and the partnership that I wanted to offer her was something I hoped she would consider of more value than simply a share in my business, for I knew then that she was the woman I wanted for my wife.

"I have the offer of a partnership already under consideration," she replied with a slight air of embarrassment; and hastily added, "But there will be time enough to talk about that later. Now it is important to get down to business."

"In what way?" I asked.

"To see that your bill is passed." "But that would be to betray your people, and—" I hesitated because it was difficult to say that I couldn't be party to her treachery.

"You may call it betrayal if you like," she said with a flash in her eyes, "but I don't think you will blame me when you know all. Since I have been in Washington the bridge company has passed its dividend on the ground that if the other bridge

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